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PETITION TO THE PETITIONERS.

Humbly Shewing,

5. Feb. 1679
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THAT there are a great number of subtle Engineers abroad, who under the Veil of Piety and Justice, invent false and scandalous reports of the Government, and Chief Magistrates of the Kingdom ; dayly labouring to imprint false suggestions in the hearts of their fellow Subjects, with design, by that means to put us together by the Ears, that they may once more make a scramble not for the Good but for the Goods of the Nation.

It is molt certain that there never was a violent attempt to make a change in Government, or to force any thing from Governours, that ever any got any thing by it, but such as had nothing to loose. By the very Constitution and Nature of all Monarchy and Kingly Governments, Kings are at their Liberty to Call and Assemble their Councillors when they please ; and Parliaments are no other, in England, than the Kings Great Council, and give themselves no other name as yet : and at this time His Majesty hath been pleased by Proclamation to signifie His Resolutions of Proroguing the Parliament ; and upon an Address being made unto Him for their Siting, he did forbid the Agitating or Presenting any more Petitions to that purpose, yet nevertheless some men amongst us, with indefatigable Industry and great Cunaing, persuade others to joyn with them to desire that of the King which he hath declared against, and in such a manner too as he hath forbid, and therefore they can expect no other then to be again denied : mark then what may be the Consequence of this proceeding. There is nothing in the world more common than for one man having made a request unto another, though for so trivial a thing as it matters not whether it be obtained or no, yet if it be denied, he that is so denied will be dis-

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Pleased with the other for denying ; and on the other side, we know that over much opportunity stirs up wrath : may not then this sort of proceeding beget an enmity between the King and His people, and when that hath happened, it hath often so fallen out, that they have not been reconciled till experience hath discovered that a Kingdom divided against it self cannot stand : It looks like a Devilish Art to drill the Nation into Rebellion, and it is not unlikely but that the next thing when the Subscriptions are finisht, will be to persuade the people to require that with their Arms which they have Petitioned for with their Hands ; or that these men that are thus irregularly violent for the Parliaments Sitting against the Kings will, may be as active, in case they should Sit, to abett and assist them to Act what they think fit, be it right or wrong, and that it is not impossible for Parliaments to do ill things, there be too many presidents.

There is nothing more dangerous to manage, or more doubtful in event, than to bring in changes and alterations in the form and nature of Government, it is as dangerous as to remove the Foundation of a House, in doing whereof the whole Building will be shaken, and besides the danger of falling, it will receive more hurt by shaking, than it doth good by the new Reparation, to attempt to force the King to call a Parliament against his will, is an attempt to change the very Nature and Foundation of the Government, for hitherto Parliaments were to Sit when the King pleased, but now some would have it that they must Sit when some of the people please. *Aiguis sub herba Latet*, there's a Snake in the Grass, somthing is to be feared lies hid, not apparent to every Eye, else whats the matter with us, is any mans Lawful Liberty restrained ? Is any mans Property invaded ? Is the Protestant Religion any ways injured by the Government ? But zealously Asserted and Protected ; are there not Laws sufficient, in a short time, utterly to root out Popery from amongst us, to say truth our causeless jealousies and fears, the old bane of the Nation, are our chief grievances : do we fear the French Invading us, let us Arm our selves with resolution against he comes, stoutly to repel him, but do not let us do his work for him before he comes, by cutting our own Throats. There is no destruction so great as when we destroy our selves, nor no greater encouragement and temptation to an Enemy than to see us at variance. The Romans attained to their great Empire by the Dissensions and Civil-Wars which they cunningly fomented amongst their Neighbours ; rather than by force of their Arms ; and they themselves again fell to ruin by the same means. The Contest between King Harold and his Brother *Tostain*, did much facilitate the Norman Conquest. It were a great deal more plausible to see a Petition to His Majesty for leave to invade this great Bugbear the French King, than that that's now on Foot, perhaps the ratling of such a Role of Parchment might

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have frightned all his Hobby-Horses into Germany, or some other more remote Country.

If the Series and Course of Government must be changed every time a Discontented or Dissenting party think fit, there will never be any settlement, for it is impossible there should be such Laws as will please all ; this Sect is for one Form of Worship and Government, the other for another, the third for a third, and all the rest of each several Sect (wherewith we too much abound) is for a by-way by it self : the Drunkards like not those Laws which restrain their Tipling, the Lascivious men are for Community of women, the Idle and Lasie that are poor and will not Labour, they are for Levelling : the Bravoes would have no man Hanged for gentiley borrowing a Sum upon the Road ; the vain Extravagant who hath wasted his Estate in Riot, he is for a year of Jubile, a Reasumption of his Estate, and Release from his Debts ; it is but the Good only that are pleased with Good Laws, and such sort of men are not the greater number in all Nations : Therefore to prevent the unreasonable desires of unreasonable men, there ever were Restraints upon men in all well Ordered Common-Wealths touching Petitions, even in those States where the Government was most Popular : when *Rome* was a Popular State, none were permitted upon pain of death to present any Petition to the State without the privity and consent of the Senate, and this had the reputation of the most necessary Law that could be, the like Rule is now observed in that Ancient and Flourishing State of *Venice* : which sort of Government many have an acking Tooth after, and would like enough have an acking Heart if they had it ; there it is not permitted that any present any Petition or Request, unto the Senate, without the advice of the Council of Sages. A notable custom it was that was amongst the *Lorecians* that he that would present any Petition or Request to have it pass into a Law, was constrained to move it with a Rope about his Neck, wherewith he was upon the place to be strangled if he failed to prove the Law by him moved for to be profitable for the people, so dangerous was Innovation, and Novelty of Laws and Liberty, for all sorts of people to meddle with the Government. Lookt upon amongst the Antients, whose examples we ought to follow in things of good success how unjustifiable and irregular, then is the course now practised in procuring Subscriptions to Petitions, as if every ordinary man that's hardly able to write his name, were able to judg when it is necessary for a Parliament to sit, and when not : but since whats past cannot be recalled, this Petitioner humbly desires those that were seduced to Subscribe the *Presumitive Petition*, to proceed no further, it is no disgrace to desist upon perceiving the evil, *Humanum est errare sed in errore perseverare bellum est.*

*Sometimes to Err may be the fault o'th best,
In faults to persevere belongs but to a beast.*

For your own selves sake (dear Fellow Cittizens and Countrymen) let us enjoy Peace while we may, violent Remedies should be applied but to desperate Diseases, , and then only when there is no other hopes left. It concerns us very narrowly to look about us that we be not seduced to work our own ruin by men who have no other hopes to enrich themselves but by fishing in troubled waters. A Civil-War is the greatest misery that can befal a Nation. Oh ! What bloody Masacres it produceth, cruel Revengings, Exactions, Robberies, Rapes, Depopulating of Cities, and Burning of Towns ? Infinite and unexpressible are the Calamities and Miseries which proceed from Rebellion, a word is enough to the wise, but though you Bray a Fool or a Factious man in a Morter, yet will they not forsake their Folly : Therefore the Petitioner concludes with a Scripture Phrase, which will certainly influence men of Religion. *If it be possible as much as lyeth in you live peaceably with all men, Rom.xii.18.*

F I N I S.

